

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7186

S E C R E T LONDON 00476

EXDIS

FOR NEA ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR MU UK

SUBJ: USE OF MASIRAH OR TAMRID (MIDWAY) AIRFIELDS

1. DURING FLIGHT ON SULTAN'S AIRCRAFT BACK TO LONDON ADVISER FAHYA OMAR ASKED EMBOFF LAMBRAKIS TO CHECK WITH DEPARTMENT AS TO WHICH AIRFIELD, MASIRAH OR TAMRID (MIDWAY), USG PREFERRED TO USE, IN CONNECTION WITH DISCUSSION DURING SULTAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. OMAR SAID HE HAD PLANNED TO TELEPHONE DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS ON THIS MATTER (AS HE HAD UNDERSTOOD SECRETARY KISSINGER TO SUGGEST DURING BLAIR HOUSE MEETING JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE) BUT ON REFLECTION PREFERRED TO USE OUR MORE SECURE CHANNEL.

2. OMAR SAID OMANIS GOT IMPRESSION THAT U.S. MIGHT HAVE PREFERENCE FOR TAMRID (MIDWAY) NOW THAT SULTAN HAS OFFERED IT. SULTAN IS PREPARED TO LET US USE EITHER OR BOTH. HOWEVER, HE AND OTHER OMANI OFFICIALS THOUGHT TAMRID (MIDWAY) MIGHT BE BETTER AS U.S. COULD POOL AIRCRAFT SUPPORT THERE WITH IRANIAN AIRCRAFT (COMMENT: OMAR MENTIONED IRANIAN PHANTOMS, THOUGH HE MAY HAVE MADE MISTAKE). HE SAID AIR STRIP THERE IS SUFFICIENTLY LONG AND FUEL STORAGE FACILITIES EXIST. OMANI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE HAPPY TO ADD ANY ADDITIONAL FACILITIES USG MIGHT REQUIRE. HE THOUGHT IRANIANS WOULD BENEFIT

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FROM SUCH PROPRIETY TO U.S. OPERATION. SINCE BRITISH

PERSONNEL OF SULTAN'S AIR FORCE THERE ARE UNDER OMANI AUTHORITY, QUESTION OF OBTAINING HMG CONCURRENCE WOULD NOT ARISE - AS IT WOULD WITH MASIRAH.

3. ON OTHER HAND, IF USG PREFERRED MASIRAH, OMANIS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW SOON SO THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED TO TELL BRITISH THAT SULTAN HAS GIVEN PERMISSION FOR USG USE AND RAF SHOULD ACCOMMODATE US. (OMAR GAVE LAMBRAKIS HIS PHILOSOPHY, WHICH HE SAID HAS BEEN COMMUNICATED IN PAST TO THE BRITISH, THAT MASIRAH IS OMANI TERRITORY AND THIS UNDER SULTAN'S SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY NO MATTER WHAT LEASE ARRANGEMENTS MAY HAVE BEEN MADE WITH THE BRITISH).

4. OMAR SAID HE IS PRESIDING OVER MEETING OF OMANI "MILITARY CHIEFS" (HE WAS NOT MORE SPECIFIC) ON JANUARY 16 IN LONDON AND WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO BRIEF THEM AND WORK OUT FURTHER ARRANGEMENTS WITH THEM BY THEN. (WE SUPPOSE THIS IS MEETING WITH BRITISH OFFICERS COMMANDING SULTAN'S FORCES).

5. LAMBRAKIS LATER CHECKED WITH ZAWAWI, WHO CONFIRMED OMAR'S REQUEST IN ITS ENTIRETY. ZAWAWI PLANS TO RETURN TO OMAN IN ABOUT 4-5 DAYS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY REPLY TO OMAR'S QUERY (WHICH HE ASKED BE PASSED TO HIM HERE DIRECTLY). IT OCCURRED TO US YOU WOULD WISH TO TAKE ABOVE INTO CONSIDERATION IN BRIEFING THE BRITISH.
SPIERS

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